

Customs & Border Protection (CBP): Securing America's Borders

Do you desire to protect American interests and secure our Nation while building a meaningful and rewarding career? If so, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is calling. DHS components work collectively to prevent terrorism, secure borders, enforce and administer immigration laws, safeguard cyber space and ensure resilience to disasters. The vitality and magnitude of this mission is achieved by a diverse workforce spanning hundreds of occupations. Make an impact; join DHS.

Discover a challenging and rewarding career in CBP, the sole organization responsible for securing the nation's borders. At U.S. Customs & Border Protection, we:

- Screen passengers, vehicles, and shipments entering our country
- Seize illegal narcotics, vehicles, and agricultural products
- Prevent unauthorized entry into the country
- Rescue individuals who fall into dangerous conditions traversing our borders

Our CBP Agriculture Specialists serve as experts in the areas of inspections, intelligence, analysis, examinations and regulatory enforcement activities relating to the importation of agricultural commodities and conveyances at Ports of Entry (POE). For more information about CBP's mission, activities and careers, visit our web site at <http://www.cbp.gov/>

****Vacancy Announcement AGS 13-1 has been amended to extend the closing date to Monday, November 19, 2012****

INFORMATION YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE YOU APPLY TO THIS POSITION

This is a standing inventory. Applicants will only be selected based on future needs of Customs and Border Protection for up to the next 12 months.

If you currently have an active record on the CBP Agriculture Specialist inventory, you do not need to apply to this announcement unless you would like to apply for a higher grade level.

If you have already been referred and tentatively selected for an Agriculture Specialist position and are currently in the pre-employment process, you do not have to apply to this announcement. If you do apply to this announcement and if you are referred for consideration and subsequently selected, your most recent selection will take precedence and replace any existing Agriculture Specialist selection for which you are in process.

NOTE: Only one on-line submission per applicant. Any additional submissions will override your previous on-line application. Applicants will be able to choose ONE geographic region during their registration.

Who May Apply:

- Open to all U.S. Citizens.
- Individuals who are eligible under a Special Appointing Authority should refer to the "Special Appointing Authority" paragraph in the "Other" Section of this vacancy announcement.
- For definitions of terms found in this announcement, please see <http://www.dhs.gov/common-terms-job-opportunity-announcements>

Organizational Location: Positions filled under this announcement are in U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Office of Field Operations. In the on-line application process, you will be asked to identify one geographic region in which you are willing to work.

Relocation Authorized: No

You must be a U.S. citizen to apply for this position
 You must successfully complete a background investigation
 Males born after 12/31/1959 must be registered with Selective Service
 You must successfully pass a drug test
 You may need to pass a medical examination

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operate 24 hours a day- 7 days a week. The CBP Agriculture Specialist (AGS) primary responsibilities are:

- Serve as a consultant in the areas of inspection, analysis, intelligence, examinations and law enforcement activities regarding the importation of agricultural/commercial commodities and conveyances at ports of entry.
- Apply laws and regulations when determining the admissibility of agriculture commodities while preventing the introduction of harmful pests, diseases, and potential agro-terrorism into the United States.
- Participate in special enforcement, targeting or analysis teams charged with collecting and analyzing information and identifying high-risk targets.
- Plan and conduct remedial actions such as treating, disinfecting, and decontaminating prohibited commodities, conveyances, contaminants or agricultural materials.

Basic Requirement for All Grades: You must have successfully completed a full four-year course of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's or higher degree that included a major field of study in biological sciences including botany, entomology, plant pathology, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry or related disciplines (e.g., ecology). If you have not completed the above described education, you must have completed at least 24 semester hours in biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry or a related discipline at an accredited college or university plus appropriate experience or additional education. Examples of qualifying experience may include working in such areas as pest management, environmental monitoring, farm management, agricultural commodity importation and/or exportation or other related experience in pest/pathogen detection, regulation, eradication and control.

GS-5: You qualify at the GS-5 level if you meet the basic requirement above.

GS-7: You qualify at the GS-7 level if you meet the basic requirements as described above AND you possess one year of specialized experience that equips you with the skills needed to perform the job duties. This experience must have been equivalent to at least the GS-5 grade level. Examples include applying clear, detailed instructions to assist with the inspection of vessels, vehicles, aircraft and baggage for the presence of restricted plant material, pests or diseases and with the review/analysis of passenger and/or commodity documents to assess the agricultural risk of their entry.

GS-9: You qualify at the GS-9 level if you meet the basic requirements as described above AND one year of specialized experience that equip you with the skills needed to perform the job duties. This experience must have been equivalent to at least the GS-7 grade level. Examples include independently conducting routine inspections of vessels, vehicles, aircraft, cargo, agriculture commodities and baggage for the presence of regulated and/or restricted plant material, pests or diseases and either safeguarding and confiscating prohibited items or treating infested material; or reviewing/analyzing passenger, conveyance, cargo and/or commodity documents, databases and tactical intelligence to assess the agricultural risk of their entry.

SUBSTITUTION OF EDUCATION FOR EXPERIENCE:

GS-7: You may substitute successful completion of one year of full-time graduate education for the experience required at the GS-7 level. This education must have been obtained from an accredited college or university and demonstrate the skills necessary to do the work of the position. A course of study in biological science, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry or a related field is qualifying. Check with your school to determine how many credit hours comprise one year of graduate education. If that information is not available, use 18 semester or 27 quarter hours.

OR

GS-7: You may substitute superior academic achievement for the experience required at the GS-7 level. You must have completed the requirements for a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale, or have class standing in the upper third of a graduating class or major subdivision, or membership in a national scholastic honor society.

GS-9: You may substitute successful completion of a master's or equivalent graduate degree or two full years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to such a degree from an accredited college or university for the experience required at the GS-9 level. This education must have been obtained from an accredited college or university and demonstrate the skills needed to do the work of the position. A course of study in biological science, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry or a related field is qualifying. Check with your school to determine how many credit hours comprise two years of graduate education. If that information is not available, use 36 semester or 54 quarter hours.

COMBINATION OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE: Appropriate combinations of successfully completed post-high school education and experience also may be used to meet the total qualification requirements for the GS-5, GS-7 and GS-9 grade levels. Your education must have included at least 24 semester hours in biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry or a related discipline appropriate to the position. Applicants may be eligible to qualify for the position based on education completed within 9 months from the date of application.

We will review your resume and supporting documentation to ensure you meet the basic qualification requirements. If you meet the minimum qualifications, we will use an online self-assessment questionnaire to place you in one of three categories based on your experience, education and training. The knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform this job are:

- Knowledge of inspection programs, policies, practices, and methods
- Ability to evaluate, analyze, review and assess prohibited items, pests or diseases
- Ability to communicate orally and in writing

If you meet the minimum qualifications, you will be placed in one of the following categories:

1. **Best Qualified:** Applicants possessing a background that demonstrates a superior level of all evaluation criteria.
2. **Well-Qualified:** Applicants possessing a background that demonstrates a satisfactory level of the evaluation criteria.

3. **Qualified:** Applicants possessing the basic qualifications, with general knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Agency Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) or the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP) Eligibles: If you have never worked for the Federal government, you are not CTAP/ICTAP eligible. Information about ICTAP or CTAP eligibility can be found at:

[http://www.opm.gov/Reduction in Force/employee resources/ctap/Employee-Guideline CTAP.asp#3a](http://www.opm.gov/Reduction%20in%20Force/employee%20resources/ctap/Employee-Guideline%20CTAP.asp#3a) To be considered well qualified under CTAP/ICTAP, you must be placed in the "Well Qualified" category for this position, as described above. In addition, you must submit the supporting documents listed in the "Required Documents" section of this announcement.

Veterans: Veterans with 5 point preference who meet the eligibility and qualification requirements are placed above non-preference eligibles within the category in which they qualify. Veterans who have a compensable service-connected disability of at least 10% are listed in the best qualified category, except when the position being filled is scientific or professional at the GS-09 grade level or higher. This position **is** considered scientific/professional. For information on veterans' preference, please see: <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/index.aspx>

To begin your online application, click the **"Apply Online"** button and follow the prompts to register or sign into Application Manager. Your application packet must include a completed assessment questionnaire, a resume, and any applicable and/or required supporting documentation. Please see the "Required Documents" section below for additional information. All application materials, including transcripts, must be in English.

We strongly encourage you to apply online. If you cannot apply online, you may fax your resume, assessment questionnaire, and supporting documents to **(478) 757-3144**. You must print a copy of and document your responses to the assessment questionnaire [View Occupational Questionnaire](http://www.opm.gov/Forms/pdf_fill/OPM1203fx.pdf) using OPM Form 1203-FX http://www.opm.gov/Forms/pdf_fill/OPM1203fx.pdf, and the official fax cover sheet: <http://staffing.opm.gov/pdf/usascoversheet.pdf>. Please include job opportunity announcement ID 628903 and provide your SSN, name, and address using the exact name you used when you filled out the questionnaire. If you have uploaded documents into Application Manager, you do not need to fax those same documents.

Applications and supporting documentation will not be accepted by mail or email. The address below is for inquiries only. You may apply more than once, but the most recent application is the only one that will be used. **You must submit your resume, your online questionnaire, and any supporting documents by 11:59 Eastern Standard Time on Monday, November 19, 2012**

- **Your resume:** A resume describing your job-related qualifications is required and must be in English. It must contain your full name, address, phone number, and a detailed description of your duties and the dates you performed them (MM/DD/YY), as well as your work schedule and salary.
- **Your responses to the job questionnaire**
- **Your transcripts:** Submit a copy of your college transcript (unofficial is acceptable). Education must be from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Education obtained from a foreign university or college is not creditable unless it has been evaluated by an organization that specializes in interpretation of education credentials. For more information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-visitus-forrecog.html>

- **Are you claiming special priority selection rights under the Agency Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) or the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP)?** You must submit a separation notice; SF-50B; a current (or a last) performance rating of record of at least fully successful or equivalent; an agency certification that you cannot be placed after injury compensation has been terminated; an OPM notification that your disability annuity has been terminated; or a Military Department of National Guard Bureau notification that you are retired under 5 U.S.C. 8337(h) or 8456.
- **Are you a veteran?** To apply veteran's preference you must submit the following proof of eligibility:
 - Five Point Preference: DD 214 (Member Copy 4)
 - Ten Point Preference: DD 214 (Member Copy 4) and supporting documentation as listed on the Standard Form 15 (Application for 10-Point Veteran's Preference). Click this link for a copy of the SF-15: http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/SF15.pdf. Veterans with a service-connected disability must also submit a VA Disability Award letter dated 1991 or later.
 - If you are currently serving on active duty, you must submit a written statement from the armed forces certifying that you are expected to be discharged or released from active duty service under honorable conditions. If you apply with a written statement at this stage, your preference will be verified by a DD 214 (Member Copy 4) upon separation from the military.

For more information about veteran's preference, please click this link:

<http://www.opm.gov/employ/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>. Please upload veterans documents under miscellaneous documents.

It is your responsibility to verify that any information entered, uploaded, or faxed is received and is accurate. Human Resources will not modify or change any part of your application. If a document is not legible, you will not be able to view it in Application Manager and you must again upload or fax it by the closing date.

Applications received at the Minneapolis Hiring Center will be evaluated and reviewed to determine eligibility. Once you have completed the application process, you will be notified by email with the determination of your eligibility. This is called a Notice of Results (NOR).

If you are among the best qualified, your application will be referred to the selecting official for employment consideration, at the highest grade for which you are determined eligible. It is important to note that referral for the position does not guarantee selection.

DHS offers competitive starting salaries and an attractive benefits package, including: health insurance, Thrift Savings Plan (similar to a 401(k)), Flexible Spending Account, retirement plan, life and long-term care insurance, Employee Assistance Program, personal leave days and paid Federal holidays. Other benefits may include: flexible work schedules, telework, tuition reimbursement, transportation subsidies, uniform allowance, health and wellness programs, and fitness centers. DHS is committed to

employee development and offers a variety of employee training and development opportunities. For more information, go to <http://www.dhs.gov/employee-benefits>.

Residency: If you are not currently a CBP employee, you must meet one or more of the following primary residency criteria for the last three years prior to applying to this announcement:

1. Resided in the United States or its protectorate or territories (excluding short trips abroad, such as vacations);
2. Worked for the United States government as an employee overseas in a federal or military capacity; or
3. Been a dependant of a United States federal or military employee serving overseas.

Exceptions may be granted if you provide complete state-side coverage information regarding participation in "Study Abroad" programs, overseas church missions, or state-side addresses of anyone who worked or studied with you overseas. You must provide information and related documentation at the time of application.

Special Appointing Authority: Veterans, military spouses, Peace Corps/VISTA volunteers, and people with disabilities possess a wealth of unique talents, experiences, and competencies that can be invaluable to the DHS mission. If you are a member of one of these groups, you may not have to compete with the public for federal jobs. To determine your eligibility and to understand what documentation would be required with your application, please click on the appropriate link below.

- **Veterans:** <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/index.aspx>
- **Military spouse:** <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/shams/index.aspx>
- **Individuals with Disabilities:** <http://www.opm.gov/disability/PeopleWithDisabilities.asp>
- **Peace Corps/VISTA and other miscellaneous hiring authorities:**
http://www.opm.gov/hr_practitioners/lawsregulations/appointingauthorities/

Separate referral lists may be generated for applicants eligible to be appointed under a non-competitive special appointing authority. You must provide documentation supporting your eligibility prior to the closing date of this announcement (please see "Required Documents"). If you have any questions regarding your eligibility, please contact the Human Resources Specialist listed at the end of this job opportunity announcement.

Background Investigation: To ensure the accomplishment of our mission, CBP requires every employee to be reliable and trustworthy. To meet those standards, selected applicants may be required to undergo, and must successfully pass, a background investigation for placement into this position. This may include a polygraph examination, a review of financial issues, and disclosure regarding criminal offenses and illegal use or possession of drugs.

Drug Test Requirement: Because the essential duties and functions performed by the position are related to complex issues involving national security and the protection of public health and the American economy, you must undergo and successfully pass a drug test.

Medical Requirements: We anticipate implementing medical qualification standards for this position in 2013. These standards are to ensure those tasked with the position's responsibilities are medically and physically capable of performing the essential tasks and job functions. The medical standards cover any disease or condition that may potentially interfere with the safe and efficient performance of the job's duties and include specific vision and hearing requirements as listed below.

Vision:

- **Distant Visual Acuity:** Must be at least 20/30 or better in the best eye with or without correction. Individuals who have undergone refractive eye surgeries/procedures (e.g., photo refractive laser surgery, keratoplast, LASIK) *may be* qualified provided they have no post-operative adverse complications and they meet the vision requirements.
- **Near Vision:** Must be 20/30 or better Snellen with or without corrective lenses.
- **Color Vision:** Must be able to distinguish colors (i.e., red, green, yellow, blue, orange, purple, pink, brown, black, white, gray). Use of an X-chrome lens *is not* acceptable.
- **Visual Fields:** A minimum of 140 degrees in the horizontal meridian is required.

Hearing:

- Hearing level in each ear must not exceed 40 decibels (dB) for the average of the following frequencies: 500, 1000, 2000, and 3000 Hertz (Hz).
- The difference in hearing level between the better ear thresholds and worse ear thresholds may not exceed 15dB for the average of 500, 1000, 2000, and 3000 Hz.
- The difference in hearing level between the better ear and worse ear may not exceed 30dB at 4000 or 6000 Hz.
- The use of hearing aids to meet the standards is acceptable.

Video-Based Test (VBT): If you are tentatively selected, you will be administered an oral Video-Based Test (VBT) interview. The test takes about one-half hour and is evaluated by a team of CBP management officials. When you are administered the VBT, you will be filmed while responding to a set of videotaped scenarios. This film will later be viewed and evaluated. The test is rated on a pass/fail basis.

Motor Vehicle Operation: You must possess a valid automobile driver's license at the time of appointment.

Training: You will be required to attend 10-12 weeks of paid training at the Professional Development Center in Frederick, Maryland. This technical training must be successfully completed according to the standards of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Failure to do so will be grounds for mandatory removal from the position. Such failure will result in either reassignment to a different position, demotion or separation from the Service by appropriate procedures. You will also be provided training at your assigned duty location.

Physical and Environmental Conditions: The work environment includes offices, aircraft operation areas, airline passenger and cargo areas, and land ports. Periods of outdoor work may be required in snow, rain or extreme heat. Occasional period of outdoor work may be required in remote areas with no modern comfort facilities. The work may involve the use of toxic chemicals, pesticides and fumigants. Protective clothing may be required such as hard hats, gloves, goggles, hearing protection and respirators.

Overtime and Shift Work: This position requires regular and recurring overtime and shift work. You must be willing and available to work overtime and rotating shifts. You may also be rotated between assignments and duty locations.

Uniforms: This position requires you to wear an officially-approved uniform while in a duty status.

Promotion Potential: Positions with known promotion potential do not guarantee promotion, nor is the promise of promotion implied.

Probationary Period: All employees new to the federal government must serve a one year probationary period during the first year of his/her initial permanent federal appointment to determine fitness for continued employment. Current and former federal employees may be required to serve or complete a probationary period.

Geographic Locations:

Applicants applying to this announcement will only be able to select **one** geographic region. Positions may be filled at any CBP port of entry within the regions. Applicants must be willing to work at any duty location that falls within that region's jurisdiction. Relocation expenses will not be paid to the initial duty location.

99HSBD001 Southwest Border - (to include but not limited to the following locations) Laredo, El Paso, Fabens, Brownsville, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Pharr, Progreso, Presidio, Rio Grande City, and Roma, Texas; Andrade, Calexico, Otay Mesa, San Ysidro, Tecate, and San Bernardino, California; and the States of Arizona, and New Mexico

99HSBD002 Northwest/Northern Border - States of Washington, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota

99HSBD003 Midwest Region – States of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Arkansas, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Ohio, Colorado and Michigan

99HSBD004 Northeast Region - (to include but not limited to the following locations) Erie, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Alexandria Bay, Champlain, Ogdensburg, New York; and the States of Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Maine

99HSBD005 Southeast Region – States of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Kentucky

99HSBD006 Florida & Caribbean Region – Florida, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, VI and St. Croix, VI

99HSBD007 Texas East Region – (to include but not limited to the following locations) Houston, Galveston, Dallas, Amarillo, Corpus Christi, Lubbock, Midland, Freeport, Port Arthur, and San Antonio, Texas

99HSBD008 West Coast Region - (to include but not limited to the following locations) San Francisco, Sacramento, Oakland, Los Angeles, Long Beach, California; and the States of Nevada and Oregon

99HSBD009 Central/East Coast Region - (to include but not limited to the following locations) Queens/JFK, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the States of Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Virginia, and West Virginia

99HSBD010 Pacific Region - Guam, Northern Mariana Islands

99HSBD011 Alaska

152400003 Hawaii

CBP uses E-Verify to validate all newly hired applicants' ability to work legally in the United States. To learn more about E-Verify, please follow this link: <http://www.dhs.gov/e-verify>

Relocation expenses *will not* be paid. To compare cost of living data, calculate mortgage scenarios, or gather information on communities and school districts, please visit the website:

<http://www.relocationessentials.com/aff/lifecare/tools/salary/col.aspx>

Follow U.S. Customs and Border Protection on Twitter [@CustomsBorder](https://twitter.com/CustomsBorder)

Please view the video "Protecting America 24/7" to learn more about CBP's Office of Field Operations:

http://cbppapps.cbp.dhs.gov/ofo/2011/protecting_america/pro_america.wmv

For more information on the CBP Agriculture Specialist position, please visit us at:

http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/customs_careers/ag_spec/